

***Part II –
The Accident Investigation Process***

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Appointing the Investigation Board

Before an accident investigation can actually begin, the appointing official must conduct a number of activities, including selecting and briefing the investigation board. These activities are discussed below.

3.1 Establishing the Accident Investigation Board and Its Authority

Upon notification of an accident requiring a Type A or Type B investigation, the appointing official selects the accident investigation board chairperson and three to six other board members, one of whom must be a DOE accident investigator. The appointing official for a Type A accident investigation is the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health (EH-1), unless this responsibility is delegated to the head of the field element. The appointing official for Type B accident investigations is the head of the field element. Limited scope investigations are chartered by the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health. A list of prospective chairpersons who meet minimum qualifications is available from the Program Manager. The Program Manager also maintains a list of qualified board members, consultants, advisors, and support staff, including particular areas of expertise for potential board members or consultants/advisors. The selected chairperson can help identify and select board members and others needed to conduct the investigation. In

selecting these individuals, the appointing official follows the criteria defined in DOE Order 225.1A, which are shown in Table 3-1.

DOE Order 225.1A establishes some additional restrictions concerning the selection of board members and chairpersons. No member shall have:

- A supervisor-subordinate relationship with another board member
- Any conflict of interest or direct or line management responsibility for day-to-day operation or management of the facility, area, or activity involved in the accident.

Consultants, advisors, and support staff can be assigned to assist the board where necessary, particularly when DOE employees with necessary skills are not available. For example, advisory staff may be necessary to provide knowledge of management systems or organizational concerns or expertise on specific DOE policies. A dedicated and experienced administrative coordinator (see Appendix C) is recommended. The Program Manager can help identify appropriate personnel to support accident investigation boards.

The appointing official must appoint the accident investigation board within three calendar days after the accident is categorized by issuing an appointment memorandum. If the board appointment is delayed beyond three calendar days, the rationale for the delay must be provided to the Assistant

Table 3-1. Board members must meet these criteria.

Role	Qualifications
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Senior DOE manager ■ Preferably a member of the Senior Executive Service or at a senior general service grade level deemed appropriate by the appointing official ■ Demonstrated managerial competence ■ Knowledgeable of DOE accident investigation techniques ■ Experienced in conducting accident investigations through participation in at least one Type A or Type B investigation, or equivalent experience ■ Effective October 1, 1998, has participated in an accident investigation course sponsored by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oversight
Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ DOE employee ■ Subject matter expertise in areas related to the accident, including knowledge of the Department's safety management system policy and integrated safety management system ■ At least one board member must be a DOE accident investigator, having participated in at least one Type A or Type B accident investigation
Board Member or Advisor/Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledgeable in evaluating management systems, the adequacy of policy and its implementation, and the execution of line management oversight ■ Industry working knowledge in the analytical techniques used to determine accident causal factors

Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health (EH-1).

The appointment memorandum establishes the board's authority and includes the scope of the investigation, the names of the individuals being appointed to the board, a specified completion date for the final report (nominally 30 calendar days), and any special provisions deemed appropriate.

The scope of the investigation includes:

- Gathering facts
- Analyzing facts and evidence
- Developing conclusions
- Identifying judgments of need related to DOE and contractor organizations and management systems that could or should have prevented the accident
- Reviewing all levels of the organization up to and beyond the level of the appointing official.

3.2 Briefing the Board

The appointing official is responsible for briefing all board members as soon as possible (within three days) after their appointment to ensure that they clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. This briefing may be given via videoconference or teleconference. If it is impractical to brief the entire board, at least the board chairperson should receive the briefing and then convey the contents of the briefing to the other board members before starting the investigation. The briefing emphasizes:

- The scope of the investigation
- The board's authority to examine DOE and contractor organizations and management systems, including line management oversight, as possible root causes of an accident, up to and beyond the level of the appointing official

- The necessity for avoiding conflicts of interest
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of management systems, as defined by DOE Policy 450.4 (Safety Management System Policy)
- Pertinent accident information and special concerns of the appointing official based on site accident patterns or other considerations.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Upon notification of an accident requiring an investigation, the appointing official selects the board chairperson and board members and briefs them before they begin the investigation.
- Board chairpersons and members must meet the experience and qualification criteria defined in DOE Order 225.1A.
- The appointing official establishes the board's authority in a written appointment memorandum.
- The scope of the investigation includes identifying causal factors and developing conclusions and judgments of need related to DOE and contractor organizations and management systems, including line management oversight, up to and beyond the level of the appointing official.